

'Neknominate' refuseniks try to break online drinking craze

February 21 2014, by Helen Rowe

Two young men on different continents have hit back at a burgeoning Facebook drinking game linked to five deaths in Britain and Ireland, launching their own attempts to break the craze.

"Neknominate", which has been sweeping social media, is an online game that involves players filming themselves [drinking](#) large quantities of alcohol while performing a stunt.

They then post the video on Facebook and nominate someone else to do the same.

Media reports in Britain have linked the craze to a number of deaths in the past month although enquiries are still underway into the deaths.

Apparent victims of the trend include 20-year-old Bradley Eames who is thought to have died after downing two pints of gin which he mixed with teabags.

"This is how you drink," he said in the video posted on Facebook. He was later found dead at his home in Nottingham, central England.

But in an attempt to derail the game, South African Brent Lindeque is seen in a YouTube video posted at the end of January explaining that he was not going to be performing any drinking feats.

Instead, he said he would carry out a good deed and nominate two

friends to do the same.

"It (my nomination) originated from Australia and I'm going to show you how South Africans do it better," he told the camera before handing a sandwich, chocolate bar and fizzy drink to a man cleaning car windscreens at a road junction.

The post has had over 700,000 hits.

'Alcohol chat'

In a similar, but apparently unconnected initiative, Julien Voinson from the southwestern French city of Bordeaux came up with the alternative idea of "smartnomination".

Declining his own Neknomination, Voinson filmed himself giving a meal of two hamburgers and two bottles of water to a homeless man and then nominated three friends to complete a similar good deed.

Voinson posted his video on Facebook last week.

In his video, which has attracted over 800,000 hits on You Tube, he says that after he was nominated for the Neknominate game he decided to do "a video that was a bit more intelligent".

On a dedicated "smartnomination" Facebook page set up by Voinson he has posted a string of videos of people performing their own good deeds.

And writing on his Facebook page, he said he had been inundated with messages of goodwill from all corners of France, as well as Britain, Belgium and Spain.

On Twitter, the Catholic charity Caritas applauded Voinson for his

intervention calling it a "fine initiative of fraternity".

The World Health Organization has repeatedly warned that "harmful drinking among young people is an increasing concern in many countries." While long an issue in Britain, it is a more recent phenomenon in other countries like France, WHO said.

In Britain, notably, the Nekominate drinking 'challenges' are generating increasing concern that the craze will spread to young teenagers tempted after seeing photographs and videos online of [young people](#) drinking dangerous amounts of alcohol.

The Drinkaware charity, funded by the drinks industry, called on parents to take a tough stance against the game.

"Parents have more influence than they think... It's never too early to talk to your children about the risks of drinking under age and to remind them that if they choose not to drink they will not be alone," said Drinkaware chief executive Elaine Hindal.

"We believe it's better to have the 'alcohol chat' in the living room than in A and E (the Accident and Emergency department of a hospital)," she said.

The French Spirits Federation, meanwhile, launched an appeal to people to drink sensibly "faced with a fresh outbreak of incitation to excessive and dangerous alcohol consumption on social networks".

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